

Maccabees Building

5057 Woodward

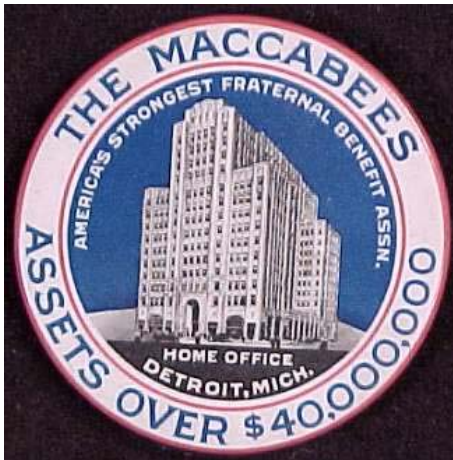
Current name: Detroit Public School Center Building

Local

State

State Marker

National ✓ 7/7/83



Maccabees Building Mirror

Photo courtesy of exocoin.com

Historic overview:

Renowned architect Albert Kahn designed the Maccabees Building in 1926 as the world headquarters of the Order of the Maccabees, a fraternal beneficiary society. First organized in 1878, they were one of the first non-sectarian societies to be organized after the Civil War. The order was based upon the history and traditions of the ancient Maccabees and their leader Judas Maccabeus, who held the Jewish nation together. Maccabeus demanded that his soldiers help provide for widows, orphans and disabled, and this idea gave impetus to the fraternal society. In 1886, women who adopted the name the Ladies of the Maccabees joined the men.

After the merger of the Modern Maccabees and the Supreme Tent in 1915, the Detroit office became the world headquarters. Eleven years later the present 14-story building was constructed. The Maccabees became known for their liberal and charitable laws, and was the first order in the U.S. that provided for those members who might become disabled by reason of accident, sickness, or old age. They were able to provide these benefits at a rate far less than what was charged by commercial insurance companies. In 1961, the Maccabees changed from a fraternal exempt society to a mutual life insurance company. A trust fund was established to provide for maintaining fraternal activities as an added benefit for certificate holders.

The Maccabees sold their building to the Detroit School Board in 1960 and moved to Southfield, Michigan. In 2002 the building was sold to Wayne State University for office use.

